change in the election code of conduct to prevent criminalisation of politics;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if so, the measures taken by the Government to prevent criminalisation of politics?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) and (b). The Model Code of Conduct for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates was formulated by the Election Commission of India in consultation with political parties. Government, not being a party to its formulation, is not required to amend it.

(c) Section 8(a) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 disqualifies a person on conviction for certain offences mentioned in the section. This section also provides that any person convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years shall be disqualified from the date of such conviction and shall continue to be disqualified for a period of six years since his release.

Disinvestment

1173. DR. M. JAGANNATH :
SHRI S. RAMACHANDRA REDDY :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have revised stand on Disinvestment;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the present stand of the Government in regard to the role of the public sector in the economy of the country?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c) The stand of the Government with regard to disinvestment and the role of Public Sector in the economy of the country is spelt out in the Common Minimum Programme. The Public Sector would continue to be an important component of the economy of the country.

Supply of Washed Coal to Power Plants

1174. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry has expressed its inability to supply washed coal with low ash contents to thermal power plants in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to set up a committee to assess the techno-economic feasibilities of washed coal for power plants;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to meet the growing need of coal of power plants in eco-friendly manner?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) to (e) Coal India Ltd. are setting up two washeries at Bina (NCL) and Piparwar (CCL) for beneficiating non-coking coal. CIL have also initiated action to set up washeries under "Build-Own-Operate" scheme for supply of washed coal to power plants.

The Ministry of Environment & Forests have constituted an Expert Committee to examine the techno-economic issues of coal beneficiation for use by thermal power plants under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board, Delhi. Representative of Ministry of Coal is also a member of the Committee. One of the terms of reference of the committee is to examine the techno-economic aspects of coal beneficiation and optimum ash reduction with particular reference to Indian Coals.

Review of Performance of Co-operative Banks

1175. SHRI NAMDEO DIWATHE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government review the performance of Co-operative Banks operating in the country;

(b) if so, the details of their performance and achievements vis-a-vis the targets fixed therefor during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Government have formulated a plan of action to revitalise co-operative banks;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the funds allocated therefor with special reference to such banks in Maharashtra;

(e) the quantum of loans provided by the Co-operative Banks and number of farmers benefited therefrom during each of the last three years, State-wise, with position of loans outstanding and the percentage of defaulting small and marginal farmers; and

(f) the steps taken to deal with the problem of bad debt and standing overdues?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) The achievement with regard to Priority Sector Lending of all banks including cooperative banks is reviewed in the Block Level Bankers' Committee (BLBC), District Consultative Committee (DCC) and the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC). Further, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) also periodically review the performance of the cooperative banks. NABARD also conducts statutory inspections of cooperative banks at periodic intervals.